



Focus on **Permit Processing** **Time Savers**

The following tips and “best practices” have been compiled to help you plan for the environmental permitting process. In addition to these, the Environmental Permitting Services arm of the state Office of Regulatory Assistance is available to help you understand, plan for and navigate the permitting process. Please call 800-917-0043 (toll free), or send an e-mail to ecypac@ecy.wa.gov or visit the Web site at <http://www.ora.wa.gov>.

- **Act early.** It takes time to complete an environmental review and obtain permits for a project. Contact agency staff early while you are in the project planning phase, before you have made a large investment in property, time or project design. Do this to identify what will need to be factored into the planning and permitting process. Consulting with permit agencies early in the planning stage saves time in the long run and can decrease project costs by eliminating costly changes. What you learn may change your selection of a site or the scope of your project. The Office of Regulatory Assistance can help you.
- **Fully explain current and future plans.** When consulting with agency staff, you should be as precise and detailed about current and future plans as possible. We can best help you identify required permits and development options if you provide complete information. Complex projects, involving several agencies, can take more time. Explaining your project to staff from multiple agencies at the same time allows those agencies to work cooperatively with a common understanding of the project. Office of Regulatory Assistance staff can help you bring together all the agencies involved with your proposal.
- **Know the players.** You should find out what agencies and permits may be involved, time frames, costs and the information you will need for permit approval. Office of Regulatory Assistance staff can work with you to identify this information. You can save considerable time in the long run by identifying early on crucial permits that will require long lead time.
- **File complete applications.** Include a complete and accurate project description with your permit applications. Submitting incomplete information will increase the processing time. You should ask questions rather than guessing or omitting information. Agency staff can help you understand the information needed to make your application complete. Some projects require engineering studies, legal descriptions, archaeological or botanical surveys, or other reports or determinations to be prepared by licensed or professional consultants. The Office of Regulatory Assistance can help you understand agency needs.
- **Portray the project as part of the community.** When designing a project, preparing an application or speaking at a public hearing, the applicant should clearly portray how the project will affect the local community. It is advisable to meet with neighbors early in the process. Aligning the project with local interests enhances acceptance of the project and can reduce processing time for some permits by reducing lengthy debate and appeals.

- **Be proactive.** It is in your best interest to know the rules and periodically check the status of the application. Responding promptly to requests for information will keep the application moving. Follow-up meetings can always be arranged to clarify any issues that arise. You should carefully read all notices, staff reports and correspondence, and ask questions when in doubt.
- **Be flexible.** Agencies may ask you to consider making changes to the project to reduce environmental harm. If you are willing and able to consider alternatives to accomplish your project goals that also reflect agency or public viewpoints expressed during the public process, you may be able to reduce costly mitigation or time delays.
- **Walk in the other person's shoes.** Often we don't speak the same language or have the same goals. It helps when we all work to understand each other's priorities and needs. Be patient, open and build trust. Recognize that the applicant and the permit agency will have an ongoing relationship after the permit is granted. Treating one another professionally and courteously can go a long way to moving the project forward smoothly.
- **Contact the Office of Regulatory Assistance.** The Office of Regulatory Assistance provides a single point of contact to get you started in the permitting process. For more information visit our Web site at:

<http://www.ora.wa.gov>

or contact

Environmental Permitting Services

One-Stop Service Center

800-917-0043 (toll free)

360/407-7037 (local)

e-mail: ecypac@ecy.wa.gov